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DAKAR PLS PASS DAO, ODC, AND RAO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/15/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV SG GA

SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: IMPROVED TENOR OF RELATIONSHIP WITH SENEGAL

REF: A. BANJUL 394

¶B. BANJUL 436

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH STAFFORD, REASON 1.4 (B AND D)

JAMMEH/WADE MEETING AT AU SUMMIT

¶1. (C) In July 14 discussion with Ambassador, recently-arrived Senegalese Ambassador Mamadou Fall spoke of an improved tenor of late in the Gambian/Senegalese relationship and cited as illustrative Senegalese President Wade's June 19 visit to Banjul (ref a) and his subsequent attendance at the July 1-2 African Union Summit here. According to Fall, Wade's side meeting with President Jammeh during the Summit was cordial, with Jammeh making clear his gratitude for Dakar's contribution of Dols 500,000 to help cover the Summit's costs (ref b). Fall stated that both leaders were careful to refrain from raising such thorny bilateral issues as the GOTG's persistent suspicions of a Senegalese hand in the March failed coup plot here and equally persistent GOS suspicions of Gambian meddling in the Casamance. The Senegalese diplomat went on to assert that at the top of his agenda for his Banjul posting was to work with the GOTG to overcome the current rough patch in bilateral ties.

COMMENT

¶2. (C) Despite the cordiality of the Jammeh/Wade meeting during the Summit, as portrayed by Fall, Jammeh continues to seek foreign pressure on Dakar to address allegations of Senegalese complicity in the failed coup attempt and of harboring its ringleader, judging from his reported approach to UNSYG Annan on the margins of the Summit (ref b). While GOTG officials had previously expressed determination, following the abortive coup, to maintain cooperation with the GOS on key projects -- e.g., construction of a bridge across the Gambia river that would facilitate travel between Northern Senegal and the Casamance region, restoration of a Joint Permanent Secretariat to manage bilateral issues -- our sense is that there has been little progress in recent months amidst the heightened bilateral strains. END COMMENT.

STAFFORD